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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -
ROBERT PALLADINO
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO TW
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

A) "Noble Taiwan Will Not Become Apathetic Because of International Isolation"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" editorialized (1/7):

"Inevitably, Taiwan people feel aggrieved after Taiwan donated money and sent people to relieve the tsunami disaster in South Asia but was excluded from participation in the tsunami relief world summit. The reaction [of Taiwan people] is rational. Since the international reality is so severe, Taiwan should not give up so easily. Taiwan should, instead, proactively devote the power of all [Taiwan] people continuously, and carry out the relief job solidly in order to speak loudly for Taiwan by making contributions that will truly benefit those who suffered [in the disaster]."

B) "An `Anti-Annexation' Law Won't Ease PRC Tension"

The conservative, pro-unification English-language "China Post" said in an editorial (1/7):

"The move by the Cabinet Wednesday to drop an article from a draft of revisions to the Referendum Law that would have granted the people the right to initiate constitutional amendments marked a reversal of a major legislative plan in the face of pressure coming from the United States.

"But as it was trying to repair strained relations with Washington, the administration made a new legislative attempt that is bound to add to tension with Beijing. The Cabinet included in the bill, which is subject to approval by the Legislative Yuan, a new provision that would allow the people to hold a referendum on territorial changes.

"But the attempt to use an `anti-annexation' law to counter an `anti-secession' law does not seem to be helpful. Beijing would not withdraw its plan to create the legislation just because of Taipei's decision to respond in kind. Nor would Beijing be likely to change its longstanding policy of using force because of a concern that an invasion could anger the people of Taiwan and stir them to hold a popular vote to say no to its action.."

C) "Chen's Proposal is Very Pragmatic"

The pro-independence English-language "Taipei times" said in an editorial (1/7):

"As for the new proposal to approve changes to national boundaries through referendums, many believe this is a move to counter China's anti-secession law.

"Presumably, in the event of Chinese military aggression justified by law Taiwan may be able to declare this a change of national boundaries or the exclusion of the Chinese Mainland from the definition of national boundaries. This would not impact the status quo of the Republic of China's (ROC) sovereignty, and technically it would still conform with the US policy of `maintaining the status quo.' It also shouldn't violate any basic principles of the pan-blue camp."

PAAL